WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a first cable system comprising:

relying on a dedicated back-up cable system for providing substantial restoration service to said first cable system.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein an operator of said first cable system pays a fee or equivalent worth for restoration service on said dedicated backup cable system.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said fee is less than the difference between the capital expenditure of said first cable system being a point-to-point (PTP) cable system and said first cable systems being a ring cable system.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

operating said first cable system such that its protection capacity is not suitable for providing substantial restoration service to itself or to a second cable system.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said first and second cable systems are part of a ring cable system and said dedicated back-up cable system is not part of said ring cable system.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein over about 50% of the equipped capacity of said first cable system is working capacity.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein over about 60% of the equipped capacity of said first cable system is working capacity.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein over about 80% of the equipped capacity of said first cable system is working capacity.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein substantially all of the equipped capacity of said first cable system is working capacity.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said dedicated backup cable system is owned by a plurality of cable system operators who rely on said backup cable system for restoration service.

11. A method of providing restoration service comprising:
providing substantial restoration service for two or more cable systems on a dedicated backup cable system.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said restoration service is provided to an operator of one of said cable systems.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said restoration service is provided at a POP.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
transmitting more preemptable traffic than non-preemptable traffic when said back-up cable system is not restoring service to one or more of said cable systems.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein said restoration service is provided for a periodic fee from an operator of one of said cable systems.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the total of periodic payments is less the difference between the capital expenditure of said one of said cable systems being a PTP cable system and said one of said cable systems being a ring cable system.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said total is less than about half of said difference.

18. The method of claim 11, wherein said restoration service is provided under a contract of planned restoration.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein restoration service is tiered.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said tiered service comprises premium service, wherein either certain fibers or wavelengths or a portion of the equipped capacity are reserved, and economy service wherein capacity is distributed evenly among operators.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said restoration service is provided on an individual or ad hoc basis at a fee greater than that charged under said contract.

22. The method of claim 11, wherein traffic is transmitted over said backup cable system using IP.

23. The method of claim 11, wherein said backup cable system is owned by two or more cable system operators.

24. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
transferring traffic from one of said cable systems to said dedicated back-up cable system when transmission over said one cable system is interrupted.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising:
transferring traffic back to said one of said cable systems from said dedicated back-up cable system when transmission over said one cable system is restored.

26. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
leasing capacity on said back-up cable system other than restoration service to a cable system operator on a temporary basis.

27. A system for providing restoration service to two or more cable systems comprising:
a dedicated backup cable system comprising at least a cable; and
an interface between said backup cable system and said cable systems such that if transmission over one or more of said cable systems is interrupted, traffic is transferrable to said backup cable system.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein a portion of the cable of said dedicated backup cable system passes through a tunnel.

29. The system of claim 27, wherein a portion of the cable of said dedicated backup cable system passes over terrestrial facilities.

30. The system of claim 27, wherein said dedicated backup cable system is operated by a shared cable station which services cable systems for which said backup cable system provides restoration service.

31. The system of claim 27, wherein said interface comprises a telecommunication link between a cable landing station of at least one of said cable systems and a cable landing station of said dedicated backup cable system.

32. The system of claim 27, wherein said interface comprises an optical cross connect connecting said dedicated backup cable system with at least one of said cable systems.

33. The system of claim 27, wherein said interface comprises a telecommunication link between a POP and a cable landing station of said dedicated backup cable system.